



The Statue of Liberty

STATUE OF LIBERTY

NATIONAL MONUMENT

BEDLOE'S ISLAND, NEW YORK

STATUE OF LIBERTY NATIONAL MONUMENT



United States Department of the Interior
Harold L. Ickes, Secretary
National Park Service, Newton B. Drury, Director



"For over three centuries a steady stream of men, women and children followed the beacon of liberty which this light symbolizes. They brought to us strength and moral fiber developed in a civilization centuries old, but fired anew by the dream of a better life in America. They brought to one new country the cultures of a hundred old ones . . .

"It is the memory of all these eager-seeking millions that makes this one of America's places of great romance. Looking down this great harbor, I like to think of the countless number of inbound vessels that have made this port. I like to think of the men and women who—with the break of dawn off Sandy Hook—have strained their eyes to the west for a first glimpse of the New World . . .

"They came to us speaking many tongues—but a single language, the universal

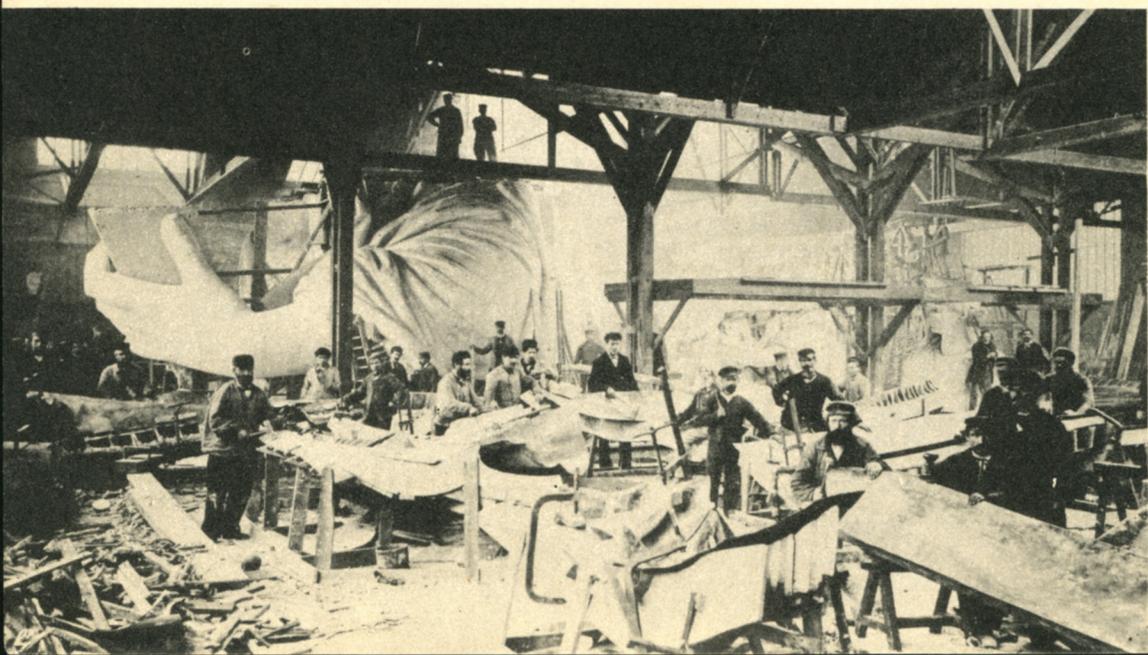
language of human aspiration.

"How well their hopes were justified is proved by the record of what they achieved. They not only found freedom in the New World, but by their effort and devotion, they made the New World's freedom safer, richer, more far-reaching, more capable of growth . . .

"The realization that we are all bound together by hope of a common future rather than by reverence for a common past has helped us to build upon this continent a unity unapproached in any similar area or similar-size population in the whole world. For all our millions of people, there is a unity in language and speech, in law and economics, in education and in general purpose which nowhere finds its match.

"It was the hope of those who gave us this statue and the hope of the American

Sheet copper being hammered into shape in Paris workshop for Statue



people in receiving it that the Goddess of Liberty and the Goddess of Peace were the same."

—*Franklin Delano Roosevelt at the fiftieth anniversary celebration at the Statue of Liberty, 1936.*

The Statue of Liberty Visit

The ferry to Bedloe's Island leaves Battery Landing (in Battery Park between the Aquarium and South Ferry), at the lower tip of Manhattan every hour on the hour, with half-hour schedules during the summer season. The ferry is easily reached by Broadway bus, by I. R. T. subway, or B. M. T. subway. The round trip fare is 35 cents for adults and 20 cents for children.

The monument is open daily to visitors, Sundays and holidays included, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (during May and September to 6 p.m. and during June, July, and August to 7 p.m.).

The entire structure is divided into three parts: base, pedestal, and statue proper. The base, an eleven-pointed star, part of old Fort Wood, is entered through a tunnel which leads to the lower elevator landing. Visitors have the choice of an elevator or

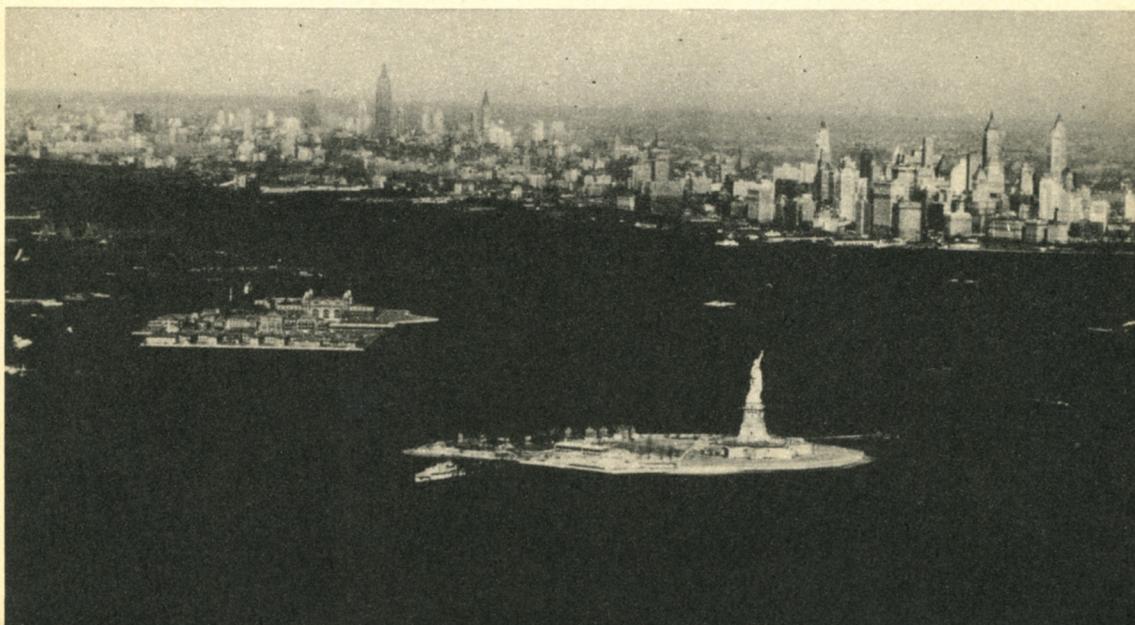
stairway to ascend ten stories to the top of the pedestal. To aid in maintaining the statue, a fee of 5 cents each way is charged for the elevator ride. A twelve story spiral stairway leads from the top of the pedestal to the head of the statue. The magnificent view of the Manhattan skyline and the interesting activities in the world's largest harbor make the balcony at the top of the pedestal a popular observation point.

The French Build the Statue

A monument to commemorate the alliance of France and the United States in the War for American Independence was proposed by Edouard Laboulaye, historian and commentator, to a group of Frenchmen shortly after the end of the War Between the States. After delays, the Franco-American Union was formed in 1875 for this purpose, with Laboulaye a president.

A young Alsatian sculptor, Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, was commissioned to design the monument. As Bartholdi entered New York Harbor to plan his work, he conceived the idea of a colossal statue standing at the very gateway to the New World and representing the one thing

Air view of Statue of Liberty and New York harbor



man finds most precious—Liberty. He saw Liberty in the form of a woman breaking the bonds of tyranny and extending the light of freedom to the world. A broken shackle lies at her feet and she steps forward, clasping in her left hand the Declaration of Independence and in her right a burning torch with which to enlighten the world. The statue was to be erected by the joint efforts of the two peoples; the French to give the statue proper, and the Americans the pedestal.

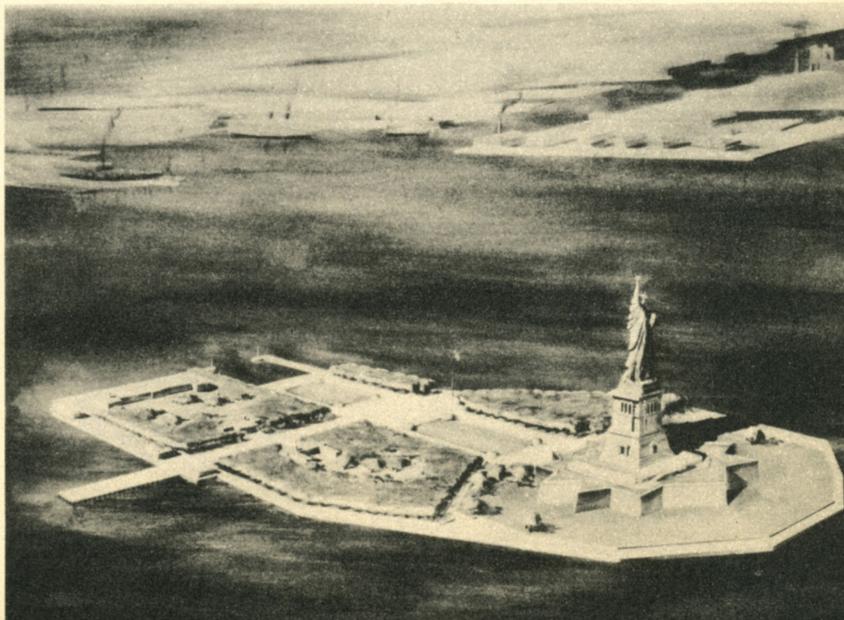
The response of the people of France was instantaneous, and a campaign to raise the necessary funds was launched with public entertainments. The cost of the statue, approximating \$250,000, however, was far greater than anticipated and it was not until June 1880 that the required amount was subscribed. Every cent of this amount was contributed by popular subscription and governmental assistance was not required.

The mechanics of enlarging Bartholdi's 9-foot "working model" to its present height of 152 feet tested the sculptor's ingenuity. The plaster model was first reproduced four times its original size.

Then section by section the 36-foot model was enlarged to its existing scale. Copper sheets $\frac{3}{32}$ of an inch in thickness (about that of a silver dollar) were pressed into wood patterns and hammered into shape by hand. The present green coating of the statue, a patina, is the result of oxidation of copper. The framework of the statue, designed by the French engineer, Gustave Eiffel, consists of four huge steel columns which bear the weight of the entire structure. The construction is indeed remarkable when one considers that the width of the face is 10 feet and that of the eyes 2 feet and 6 inches; and that the arm carrying the torch is 40 feet long and 12 feet in diameter at the point of greatest thickness.

The arm of the statue which carries the torch was exhibited in Philadelphia in 1876 at the Centennial Celebration of American Independence. Later in the same year it was exhibited at Madison Square in New York City and then returned to France. The head of the statue was shown in Paris at a World's Fair held there in 1878. On July 4, 1884, in Paris, the completed statue was presented to the United States. The following year it was

Perspective drawing of Bedloe's Island and the Statue of Liberty showing ultimate development plan



taken apart and the pieces crated for shipment to New York City.

Americans Build the Pedestal

Meanwhile an American committee started to raise \$125,000 for the construction of the pedestal. The original estimated cost, however, proved to be about half the amount necessary to complete the pedestal. Work on the pedestal stopped in the fall of 1884 with only 15 feet of the structure completed, pending subscription of an additional \$100,000. On March 16, 1885, the *New York World* took up the crusade. In daily editorials Joseph Pulitzer, publisher of the *World*, assailed public indifference and urged benefit performances, sporting events, and entertainments for the pedestal campaign fund. The drive was so successful that he was able to announce the obtaining of this fund by August 11, 1885, less than 5 months after the drive had been started, and 2 months after the arrival of the statue in America.

In the interim, Congress had authorized that ground on Bedloe's Island should be set aside for the erection of the statue in New York Harbor. Situated conspicuously off the end of Manhattan, Bedloe's Island itself had an interesting history, having been variously occupied as a farm, quarantine station, official residence, pest house, gallows site, and military prison. The masonry ramparts of old Fort Wood, built on the island in 1808-11, were used as a part of the foundations for the pedestal of the statue.

In 1883, work on the construction of the pedestal was commenced under the direction of Gen. Charles P. Stone, engineer in chief. It was built of concrete with a granite facing. Four huge steel girders were built into its walls, with similar girders placed a few feet from the top of the pedestal, which connect with the first set by iron tie rods and continue on up into the framework of the statue itself. It was only thus that the 152-foot figure placed on a pedestal almost 150 feet in height could withstand the high winds of the bay.

Dedication and Recent History

Edouard Laboulaye did not live to see the work finished and his place as president of the Franco-American Union was taken by Count Ferdinand de Lesseps, builder of the Suez Canal. Bartholdi was among those present to see President Grover Cleveland dedicate the statue on October 28, 1886.

Lighting this gigantic structure to best advantage was a perplexing problem. The system of electric lights originally installed has been replaced several times by more modern equipment. Today, the statue is floodlighted at night by ninety-six 1000-watt lamps located at the base, with incidental lights introduced at certain points on the statue to eliminate undesirable shadows. The torch itself is lighted by thirteen 1000-watt lamps.

In 1937 the National Park Service supervised the replacement of some of the ironwork and strengthened and reconditioned structural features of the statue.

The statue was first placed under the jurisdiction of the Lighthouse Board, as it was for many years considered an aid to navigation. In 1901 control was transferred to the War Department, which continued to maintain a small army post, Fort Wood, on one end of the island. On October 15, 1924, the Statue of Liberty was declared a national monument by Presidential proclamation. The Army abandoned Fort Wood in 1937 and the remainder of the island was added to the monument.

Plans for the extensive improvement of the Statue of Liberty and Bedloe's Island have been prepared, and this work is being carried forward as rapidly as possible. Interpretative displays and exhibits are being planned for the benefit of the visitor.

Administration

The Statue of Liberty National Monument is administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior.

All communications should be addressed to the Superintendent, Statue of Liberty National Monument, Bedloe's Island, New York, N. Y.

